

## EDISON IN "RANSON'S FOLLY"

UNPRETENTIOUS LITTLE PLAY  
PRODUCED AT THE HUDSON.

Deals With Army Life on the Harding Davis Story Line, and Is Well Acted. In the probable—Robert Edison and Samuel Miliken share "the honors."

Pleasing and unpretentious! That was the verdict of a large audience at the Hudson Theatre last night after "Ranson's Folly" was finished. It is a three-act comedy of American life, by Richard Harding Davis, and is built on extremely simple lines—melodrama with the melodrama omitted.

If you have not read Mr. Davis's story—and we confess that we belong to that minority—you will nevertheless extract amusement from the staging of its rather improbable anecdote. Indeed, the incident is a meagre part of dramatic butter to be spread with effect over quite so large a surface as the acts of the play. It is a thin spot in Act II, but its curtain saved it.

Act I is interesting, but the strong scene is reserved until just before the end of the last act, and it is a capital situation—tense, genuine and solved with no little theatrical cleverness. And the acting last night would have saved a much weaker play.

The tale is simple. A young officer, sprig of a United States Senator's millionaire, finds life at the army post dull after his exciting experience in Cuba and the Philippines. "I was not with Roosevelt, the young man," he didn't say it, but he meant to, for he spoke of the Rough Riders as a fun-breeding institution. So he, on a wager, held up a stage coach. All's well for the youth.

But unfortunately for his madcap prank a real hold-up man, a desperado, and the United States paymaster was shot and robbed. Our gay blade is suspected, denounced and arrested.

Thus there is nothing startling. However, Mr. Davis juggles with his audience's credulity and until the close we had not read the original story were cajoled into believing the wrong man was guilty.

A love affair, neatly portrayed, raises dust. Ranson is crazy over a girl, the daughter of the post trader. His name is Edith. His daughter's name is Mary. She doesn't sing—she is plain Mary. She is a little girl, with large pleading eyes, a naughty little trick, a winning manner. Instinctively you look for a cage. But this little lady needs none. She has a will of her own and at the proper moment she will be a terror to the heart. It is worth discovering for yourself. Miss Miliken played most dexterously.

Mr. Edison acted with finish, with repose, with humor. He is always sympathetic because he plays without fuss or feathers, and in his love-making is sincere and does not pull out the tremolo stop so far that the sentiment quivers in the air.

It is not a role which makes emotional demands upon an actor. In bearing he was the manly young soldier who had more money than sense, and the characters seem burdened with much common sense, or the folly of Ranson would have been taken as seriously as it was.

Harry Harwood plays the part of Pompey, a young man who is studying for his orders. It comes out in Act II that Jacques is already slipped from the monastery in the night and seen Pompey, for whom he had developed a violent passion, and desired to go on the stage.

This longing was soon gratified. Pompey's lesson may become suddenly smitten with a guilty conscience and determined to enter the priesthood, leaving the pretty actress distracted until Jacques returns. He is a man of letters, and takes the delinquent's place. He escapes with the actors is forced to flee to escape imprisonment.

His suffering for her sake causes Pompey to return his love, but just then a Jesuit emissary tempts her into the belief that she can light her way to Rome, and she promises to forsake her ambition and go with him to some faraway place where they may dwell in peace.

All goes well until the Jesuits hear of their plans. Then a perfidious actress is hired to tell Jacques that Pompey had already become the King's favorite, and the young man denounced himself as a deserter from the army. He is promptly shot, regardless of Pompey's assurance that the Colonel of his regiment had given Jacques an indefinite leave of absence at her request. Pompey then ends her distress by stabbing herself with her lover's dagger.

Others in the cast with Miss Bingham and Mr. Woodruff are Bijou Fernandez, Edgar Davenport, J. H. Gilmour and W. L. Abington.

STRENUOUS LIFE IN RUSSIA  
With a Duel With Swords in It Displayed at the American Theatre.

Ralph Stuart made his debut as a star last night at the American Theatre in a dramatized version of Arthur W. Marchmont's story of Russian life, "By Right of Sword." The stage version was made by Mrs. Ogden Doremus and Leonidas Westervelt. There are four acts, beginning with a military ball at Moscow.

To Russia, Richard Hamilton (Ralph Stuart) goes in search of adventure. He is an American of the strenuous kind, so he likes excitement. At the military ball he is mistaken by Olga, the beautiful daughter of a Russian officer, for her brother. This mistaken identity causes numerous necessary complications, and before they end Hamilton has to fight a duel with swords.

This gives Stuart a chance to display his ability as a swordsman. The play pleased the audience at the American last night and there is no reason why it shouldn't please it to do so some time. Jessamine Rodgers is the leading woman, and that sterling old actor, Joseph Wheeler, Sr., is Weber, the nihilist. Stuart's other part, for his brother, is a long-drawn knife awoke her from her first slumber.

Mr. Marchmont was again a source of delight. Like all other conductors, he failed to get the tremendous power that Seidell got in the force scene, but in the more delicate parts of the score, such as the question scene, the "Waldweber" and the duet of Act III, he brought out the beauties of the music with exquisite finesse and a most poetic effect.

VIRGINIA EARL HOME.  
That is at Daly's Where She Feels She Belongs—Brings "Sergeant Kitty."

"Sergeant Kitty," a military comedy opera by R. H. Burdette and A. Baldwin Stone, with Virginia Earl as the star, was seen last night for the first time by a Broadway audience at Daly's Theatre.

## RETURN OF MISS REHAN.

An Enthusiastic Audience Welcomes Her In "The Taming of the Shrew."

The reception accorded last evening to Miss Ada Rehan and Mr. Otis Skinner upon their appearance at the Lyric Theatre in "The Taming of the Shrew" was such as must have earned there hearty applause. They had an opportunity to show that they deserved the cordiality of the spectators each was welcomed, and through the progress of the play the audience grew more and more enthusiastic.

Surrounded as they were by a company fully competent to interpret the play, the fine art of Miss Rehan and of Mr. Skinner showed again the many excellencies which are familiar to New Yorkers. Miss Rehan has made the character of Katherine her own, and if there is any change in her interpretation of the part it is in the way of added touches that improve an already finished performance.

Mr. Skinner's command of blank verse, his elocution, his presence—all need no new praise. Sufficient it is to say that Miss Rehan and Mr. Skinner gave their accustomed scholarly and finished interpretation of these parts.

In the company are George Clarke as Christopher Sly, Walter Pye as The Lord, Katherine Evans as The Hostess and Henry Woodruff as Vincentio. Walter Pye as Vincentio, Ben T. Ringgold as Gremio, Joseph Weaver as Hortensio, Russell Bedford as Grumio, and Walter Lewis, William Russell, John Boylan, Walter Howard and Charles B. Welles in the other male parts.

Miss Howard was a handsome Bianca, an excellent foil to the shrewish Katherine, and Kate Fletcher as Curtis completed a well rounded, well balanced cast. The music was excellent. The music, well handled, and the entire production appealed strongly to an audience willing to be pleased but not giving such a reception to a less meritorious performance.

## AMELIA BINGHAM'S NEW PLAY.

"Olympie" a Tragic Play From the French of Decourcelle.

Amelia Bingham and her company opened at the Knickerbocker Theatre last night in "Olympie," a play written by Pierre Decourcelle on an inspiration drawn from a novel by Alexandre Dumas. The stage settings were unusually good, with seven very pretty stage pictures in the four acts.

The story of the play hangs upon the efforts of the Society of Jesus to undermine the power of France. Pompey, over the King of France in 1776.

In Act I, "Olympie," a Parisian actress, played by Miss Bingham, visits the cloisters at Avignon with a party of gay companions and meets Jacques (Henry Woodruff), a young man who is studying for his orders. It comes out in Act II that Jacques is already slipped from the monastery in the night and seen Pompey, for whom he had developed a violent passion, and desired to go on the stage.

This longing was soon gratified. Pompey's lesson may become suddenly smitten with a guilty conscience and determined to enter the priesthood, leaving the pretty actress distracted until Jacques returns. He is a man of letters, and takes the delinquent's place. He escapes with the actors is forced to flee to escape imprisonment.

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## STAGE FIGHT LIKE REAL.

Pulls Down the Chandelier and Makes the Orchestra Leader Wish He'd Ducked.

Theodore Kremer, who runs a melodrama factory on the west side of town, had better look to his laurels. Lincoln Carter is camping on his trail. Mr. Carter wrote "The Eleventh Hour," which is the attraction at the Third Avenue this week. He believes in thrills and plenty of them, and carries out this theory in his play.

The most realistic scene is the last act. This act shows the driving point of a Chicago banker. Here the villain and the hero meet and fight for the hand of the lovely maiden. They smash furniture and break chairs. They even put down the chandelier. This fight was so realistic at the matinee yesterday that every one in the audience stood while it was on, and the leader of the orchestra was seen to lead by a chuck of something before it was over. The hero won.

## NEW IN MELODRAMA.

"The Saint of Life" Takes With a Crowded Audience at Proctor's.

At Proctor's Ploasure Palace in East Fifty-eighth street a new melodrama called "The Saint of Life" was produced yesterday to the entire satisfaction of a crowded house at both the afternoon and evening performances. This melodrama is in four acts. Walter Matthews wrote it and put sufficient action in it to satisfy the audience like their stage shows exciting. Some of the players are Rachel Acton, James Heenan, Nelson Lovette and Horace Maywell.

## "SIEGFRIED" AT THE OPERA.

WAGNER'S GENIUS DISCLOSED IN THE FULLNESS OF ITS POWER.

The Beauty of the Nibelungen Trilogy Compared With the Pretentious Solemnity of "Parsifal"—Mr. Kraus as Siegfried; Gadski, Brunnhilde.

After the weary workings of religious mechanism and philosophic speculation in the consecrated festival play "Parsifal," the revival of "Siegfried" at the Metropolitan Opera House last night was a source of abiding joy. This is a drama about which Wagnerian doctors generally agree. To be sure, those who regard it as the solemn duty to preach now, as they did in 1876, that the king can do no wrong, continue to promulgate disputatious decrees as to the excellence of the smoke-snorting dragon and the wire-wound bird. But with these self-elected defenders of the right this argumentative method has grown to be a habit.

No one worries over the clumsiness of the disheveled king nowadays. A few may laugh in their beards and murmur, "Oh, Wagner, Wagner, how art thou translated," but that is all. As for the bird—well, all stage birds are wry, and so this one have a voice that is not we are content. These slight blemishes do not destroy the ineffable beauty of the glorious drama of youth and love. What a grand old world epic it is, to be sure. The boy of pure mind made man by love's awakening; the youth, forging his father's broken sword and crushing it through the anvil; the ardent seeker after adventure slaying the clumsy warden of the Nibelung hoard and lying down to rest in a forest where the very birds commune with him; the same laid smiting to death the lying dwarf who would undo him, waving the sacred spear of All-Father and plunging through fire to the lips of the sleeping enchanted bride—these are the stuff poetic dreams are made of.

What matter the flower girls and the magic garden and the illuminated chalice of "Parsifal" after these? Here all gods and throbs with a splendid humanity and the music is surcharged with immortal beauty. The second act alone of "Siegfried" contains more genuine inspiration than the whole score of the drama of the Nibelungen. How much more beautiful the renunciation doctrine as preached in "Der Ring des Nibelungen" than in "Parsifal" after these? Here all gods and throbs with a splendid humanity and the music is surcharged with immortal beauty. The second act alone of "Siegfried" contains more genuine inspiration than the whole score of the drama of the Nibelungen. How much more beautiful the renunciation doctrine as preached in "Der Ring des Nibelungen" than in "Parsifal" after these? Here all gods and throbs with a splendid humanity and the music is surcharged with immortal beauty. 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